

BRITISH DX CLUB

THE MOYABI STORY



**The History of Gabon's
High-Power Shortwave
Radio Station at Moyabi
1979-2013**

THE MOYABI STORY

Compiled by Tony Rogers

Between 1979 and 2013 the powerful transmitter site at Moyabi in Gabon was used by Africa No 1 for its commercial shortwave service to Africa. In addition, several other international and religious broadcasting services used the site for relays to Africa and beyond during this period.

In this feature I have gone through the pages of the British DX Club magazine "Communication" back to the late 1970's and, with the help of other sources, compiled a timeline of events up to the last known use of the site in early 2013, which I hope tells the story of how this powerful transmitting station became familiar to DXers and shortwave listeners around the world.

Gabon is a country in west central Africa, bordering Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, and the Republic of Congo. It was the last of the Equatorial Francophone group to obtain its own broadcasting service, which commenced in 1959. By the early 1970's, the Gabonese broadcasting system had undergone considerable expansion with French help and this subsequently led to the decision to set up a powerful transmitting station in the country to cover the whole of the African continent. The site chosen for this project was Moyabi, some 600 km south of the capital, Libreville.

The Moyabi Story starts in 1974 with an item from the Africa No 1 website at www.africa1.com, along with a photograph of the Africa No 1 offices and studios in Libreville.

1974: The President of the Republic of Gabon, Omar Bongo Ondimba, decides to equip his country with a powerful international shortwave broadcasting station (www.africa1.com)



September 1979: The power station and installation of four 500 kW transmitters at the Moyabi transmitter complex is completed. However, transmissions from the Africa No 1 cannot be started until further work is undertaken. The Ministry of Finance and Economy indicates that the 1.7 billion francs needed for the completion of the project will not be available until 1980. (WBI/BBCM)

September/October 1979: Test transmissions from Moyabi are conducted between 17 September and 27 October 1979. The tests carried ID's as "Africa Number One" with announcements in English and Arabic to the Middle East and in English and French to West Africa. Reports are requested to be sent to: Africa No 1, Mailbox No 1, Libreville, Gabon. Telediffusion de France was participating in these tests. (WBI/BBCM)

Schedule of test transmissions for the weeks commencing 8, 15 & 22 October 1979:

8-13 October 1979:

1300-1600	East Africa	17820	1600-1800	East Africa	15270
1300-1700	Brazil	21635	1700-2100	Latin America	21635
1300-1800	N Africa/Europe	21635	1800-2100	East Africa	15325
1300-2100	N Africa/Europe	17895	1800-2100	N Africa/Europe	15270

15-20 October 1979:

0400-0500	South Africa	7 MHz	0600-0800	South Africa	15125
0400-0600	CAR/Chad	7 MHz	0600-1200	Zaire	9 MHz
0400-0600	Zaire	7 MHz	0700-1200	CAR/Chad	11945
0500-0600	South Africa	9 MHz	0700-1200	Zaire	15200
0500-0700	Zaire	11945	0800-1200	South Africa	17835
0600-0700	CAR/Chad	9 MHz			

22-27 October 1979:

1300-1600	Zaire	15200 + 9 MHz	1700-1900	South Africa	15270
1300-1700	CAR/Chad	11750	1700-2100	CAR/Chad	11755
1300-1700	South Africa	17820	1900-2100	South Africa	7 MHz
1600-2100	Zaire	11945 + 7 MHz			

Extracts from the October 1979 edition of British DX Club "Logbook" - loggings from Gordon Darling

17 September 1979:

21525 0600-1200 Moyabi, Gabon. First day of test. Strong and very good signal for most of the time. Alternate half-hours in English and Arabic. ID as "Africa One" which is the name of the holding company jointly owned by Gabon & TDF France. Asking for postcard reports to Africa Number One, Mailbox 1, Libreville for participation in prize draw including a Peugeot car as first prize.

18 September 1979:

15200 0600-1200 Moyabi, Gabon. English and French alternate every half-hour. Fair/Poor and parallel to very poor 11945.

19 September 1979

11915 0430-0500 Moyabi, Gabon. Test, French. Poor.

May 1980: RTV Gabonaise reports that the President has received the French Minister of Co-operation on 2 May 1980 and an agreement has been signed on the financing of the "international radio station" at Moyabi (Africa No 1). (WBI/BBCM)

Further tests from Africa No 1 are heard on various shortwave frequencies with continuous music without announcements. (WBI/BBCM and QTH Africa)

January 1981: The Director of Sud Radio in Andorra is assigned to get Africa No 1 on air by 1 February 1981 (Glenn Hauser on RCI DX Digest)

February 1981: Africa No 1 begins regular transmissions on 7 February 1981. Studios are in Libreville, and the transmitters in Moyabi - 4 x 500 kW, but only one is in use at any one time. The first used frequency is 4808 kHz at 0500-0800 and 1800-2300 but this changes to 4812 kHz on 11 February and then subsequently noted on 4811 kHz. 7200 kHz used between 0800-1800. Programming consists mainly of popular European, American and African music, in French with slick professional DJ's, news bulletins and some advertisements.

Africa No 1 address is PO Box No 1, Libreville. The Moyabi transmitters are to be rented to RFI for 6½ hours per day and relays of RFI's African service are heard between 1800-2130 on 15345 and 11810 kHz and are thought to emanate from Moyabi. Inaudible in UK 0700-1700. (WBI/BBCM)

June 1981: For the J-81 period Radio France International uses the Moyabi relay station for French to Africa at 1800-2130 on 15435 and 7170 kHz. (WBI/BBCM)

July 1981: Africa No 1 extends the use of its new 25mb freq 11755 kHz - noted 0600-2300 and presumably longer. // 4812 kHz. Use of 41mb not confirmed. Reception indicates 500 kW on 11755 kHz but reduced power on 4812 kHz. (QTH Africa)

August 1981: Further monitoring has established that Africa No 1 is using the 25mb frequency of 11755 kHz daily at 0455-2305. (QTH Africa)



Africa No 1 QSL card from the collection of Dave Kenny

December 1981: Moyabi seems to be testing all of its 500 kW transmitters simultaneously in the evening GMT. Two of these carry programmes of RFI for Africa while the remaining three are used for Africa No 1. Glenn Hauser reports 7200 kHz being heard in the US with Africa No 1 as late as 2200. Some days parallel to 4811 kHz, some days instead of 4811 but always parallel 11755 kHz during the entire transmission span (to 2300). The Lutheran World Federation announces that it will use transmitters of Africa No 1 for religious programmes in the near future. (QTH Africa)

May 1982: Africa No 1 adjusts its 60mb band frequency from 4811 to 4810 kHz. (AWR World DX News); Moyabi heard testing various new frequencies which include 11930 kHz in early evening GMT and 17890 kHz heard around midday GMT. (QTH Africa)

July 1982: Africa No 1 latest schedule has 11940 kHz at 0500-0600 and 1700-2300, 15205 kHz at 0600-1700 (RN Media Network); Gabon also heard testing in English, Mon/Wed/Fri on 15200 kHz; also 1700-1745 on 9585 kHz (SCDX)

May 1983: In a letter to BDXC member Walter Carmichael, Radio Japan give details of improvements to their external services. These include four 300 kW and for 100 kW transmitters and the future use of overseas relay stations. This would be done by renting airtime, including the 500 kW Moyabi transmitter in Gabon to improve reception in Europe and North Africa. These plans are due to go before the Japanese parliament and the results should be known soon (Walter Carmichael)

June 1983: During the OAU Conference in Addis Ababa, Africa No 1 uses additional frequencies of 21475 and 21480 kHz for special conference reports at 0700 and 1600 (Dave Kenny)

July 1983: Publicity from Radio Japan says that a team would be in Gabon in early July to hold discussions with regard to the use of the Moyabi station (used by Africa No 1 etc) to relay NHK; they would also attempt to conduct test transmissions on 3-5 July at 0700-0730 on 17825, 1000-1030 on 15445, 1725-1755 on 21485, and 7-8 July at 0500-0530 on 15405, 1725-1755 on 21485 (WBI/BBCM). Confirmed 3 July with Japanese music interspersed with announcements in several languages identifying simply as "International Transmitter Centre Moyabi, Republic of Gabon" - no mention of Radio Japan (Dave Kenny)

August 1983: An extract from "QSL Report" in "Communication" says that a verification letter has been received by Chris Gibbs in 34 days from Voice of the Gospel confirming their relay via Moyabi on 11815.

September 1983: NHK states that the Radio Japan tests via Moyabi were very well received in their target areas of Europe and the Middle East. This reinforces their intention to use Moyabi as a regular relay station (WBI/BBCM, SCDX)

October 1983: Adventist World Radio begins broadcasting from Moyabi. Programmes in French are broadcast Monday-Saturday from 1700-1800 on 9630 kHz (DX Panorama vi Andrew Guy).

November 1983: Swiss Radio International conducts a series of test transmissions 23-25 November for listeners in South America from "a relay station in Africa". The results will determine whether SRI takes any further steps towards using relay facilities. The tests, on 15305 and 11715 kHz from 2300-0130, were confirmed by monitoring observations (RN Media Network & BBCM)

January 1984: The full Africa No 1 schedule as monitored by BBCM: 0500-0600 on 11940 & 4810, 0600-0800 on 15200 & 4810, 0800-1800 on 15200 & 7200, 1800-2300 on 11940 & 4810. Main news bulletins in French are at 0630, 0730, 1230, 1900 and 2130 (BBCM)

NHK, Radio Japan, is to go ahead with plans to set up relay stations in South Asia (probably Sri Lanka or Thailand), Gabon and Panama. Relays from Sines (Portugal) are to continue and may be expanded (SCDX via Ron Cross, Dave Kenny)

March 1984: A Radio Japan press release states that the station will start using the 500 kW transmitters of the Africa No 1 relay station during April to relay programmes to Europe and the Middle East. Programmes will be fed from Tokyo to Paris via a communications satellite over the Indian Ocean and then from Paris to Gabon via a satellite over the Atlantic. Two new verification cards are issued for the Gabon relays (WBI/BBCM)

April 1984: Radio Japan commences relays via Moyabi on 2 April with the following schedule:

- 0400-0600 on 15315 kHz - Russian 0400, Swedish 0430, Italian 0445, German 0500, French 0530, beamed to Europe.
- 0600-0800 on 21575 kHz from Gabon (with 17810 & 15300 from Japan) Japanese 0600 and English 0700, beamed to Middle East and Europe.
- 1500-1700 on 21550 kHz from Gabon (with 9580 and 11815 from Japan) English 1500, Japanese 1600, beamed to Middle East and Europe.

Radio Japan specifically requests reception reports on these broadcasts, comparing reception with the transmissions direct from Japan - special verifications are to be issued (Roger Tidy)

August 1985: Africa No 1 has news in English at 1500 (weekdays) on 7200 & 15200 kHz (SCDX)

September 1985: Africa No 1 moves from 11940 to 15475 at 1700. Although programmes are mostly in French, a pop music programme with a bilingual French/English DJ is sometimes heard around 1930 on weekdays. A short English news bulletin is also heard around 0903 (Edwin Southwell)

February 1986: Africa No 1 moves its 250 kW transmitter from 4810 to 4830 kHz. First noted on the new channel on 21 January 1986 and heard with its usual good signal (Alan Pennington); Chris Greenway points out that until a year or so ago 4830 kHz was used by RTV Gabonaise from Franceville.

January 1987: Feasibility studies are carried out by Radio Japan with a view to expanding the relay services via Moyabi and Sackville ("Radio Japan News")

March 1987: Africa No 1 has news headlines in English at 0903-0906 on 7200 and 15200; 1245-1248 on 15200; 1700-1702 and 1853-1858 on 4830 and 15475 kHz (Brian Murray)

June 1987: RFI is now using 4890 kHz via Moyabi for French (AWR via Ron Young); News in English from Africa No 1 is at 0903, 1233 and 1503 on 7200 and 15200 kHz (Nicholas Vaughan-Baker)

November 1987: Africa No 1 broadcasts an English programme twice weekly for 25 minutes which is produced in London by an African staff (Media Network via Nicholas Vaughan-Baker)

December 1987: Africa No 1 schedule: 0500-0600 and 1700-2300 on 4830 kHz, 0600-1700 on 7200 kHz, 0700-0800 on 11940 kHz, 0800- 1700 on 15200 kHz and 1700-2300 on 15475 kHz. Most programming is in French apart from certain bilingual music programmes, and English news summaries at 0900, 1230 and 1500 (SCDX)

Technical problems at the Moyabi site on 5 December prevented Radio Japan from relaying programmes from the studios in Tokyo. As a result a selection of programmes with announcements in English, French and German were noted at 2245 direct from a studio in Gabon (Tony Rogers)

January 1988: Adventist World Radio is now relaying programmes in English to West Africa via Moyabi on Sundays from 1200-1300 on 17880 kHz (SCDX)

March 1988: AWR Africa via Moyabi schedule: Monday-Saturday in French on 9625 kHz from 1700-1800. Beginning 7th February 1988 transmissions in English have also been aired on Sundays at 1200-1300 on 17890 kHz. AWR Africa's address is: BP 1751, Abidjan 08, RCI, Ivory Coast (schedule via Colin Wright)

Swiss Radio International relays via Moyabi are at 2215-0100 on 11925 kHz (no English during this period) (schedule via Mike Terry)

1989: A fifth 500 kW transmitter is added at Moyabi (as per TDP)



July 1989: Africa No 1 replaces 4830 with 9580 kHz, // 15475 kHz, 0500-0600 & 1600-2300 (BBCM)

September 1989: Africa No 1 schedule: 0500-0700 on 9580 kHz; 0700-0800 on 9580 17630 kHz; 0800-1600 on 17630 kHz; 1600-2100 on 9580 15475 kHz; 2100-2300 on 9580 kHz. Also 94.5 FM is used 0500-2300 (BBCM)

September 1989: Radio France International heard on 13 & 14 August at 1900-2100 on 3305 kHz, apparently via Moyabi (BBCM)

January 1990: Swiss Radio International have a new relay from Moyabi at 1900-2100 on 12035 kHz (Jim Parker/Edwin Southwell)

January 1991: The Voice of America hires airtime over Africa No 1 at 0300-0400 on 15330 and 9655 kHz to replace the Monrovia transmitters which are off air due to the civil war in Liberia (Media Network); an article in PWBR 1999 Edition later reported: "The VOA attempted to make up for the loss of the station (VOA Liberia relay). It purchased time on Africa No 1 in Gabon, but at \$800 per transmitter-hour this was not a long term solution".

March 1991: Africa No 1 schedule: 0500-0655 on 9580 kHz, 0655-1600 on 9580 & 17630 kHz, 1600-1900 on 9580 & 15475 kHz, 1900-2300 on 9580 kHz. All in French, except for a news summary in English around 1255/1300 (BBCM)

October 1993: AWR Africa is to give up transmissions via Gabon. For those who still need a QSL the current schedule is 0500-0600 on 9625 kHz and on Sundays only 1200-1300 on 11780 kHz (KW Panorama/Hans-Peter Tillmann)



May 1994: AWR-Africa transmissions via Moyabi ended on 30 April after 11 years. Dr Adrian Petersen of AWR subsequently said that for economy of power consumption, it was known that the AWR unit was on the air from Moyabi much of the time at half the maximum 500 kW transmitter power.

September 1994: Radio Amahoro, operated by a Brussels-based humanitarian group, is aimed at Rwandan refugees throughout central Africa and uses transmitters at Addis Ababa and Moyabi. Address: Radio Amahoro, [Amani?] Centre, Rue de Noye 332, 1040 Brussels, Belgium. Schedule: 0430-0500 on 9560-Addis Ababa and 1700-1800 on 9790-Moyabi, both in Kinyarwanda (BBCM)

October 1994: Swiss Radio International relays via Moyabi are only carried on 6135 kHz at 2000-2030 in English, 2030-2100 in French, 2100-2130 in Italian, and 2130-2200 in German. These are effective until 31st December only, when the current relay agreement runs out. The new SRI transmitter at Montsinery, French Guiana, now fully operational (schedule/Tony Rogers)

August 1996: Improved reception of Radiodiffusion Television Gabonaise on the 60mb frequency of 4777 kHz in the evenings may suggest the use of one of Africa No 1's SW transmitters. An agreement was recently signed between Gabonese national radio and Africa No 1 for the relay of Gabonese national radio programmes from Moyabi to enable the station to cover the whole of Gabon (observations by Tony Rogers and Kevin O' Daly)

October 1998: Africa No 1 schedule: 0500-0700 on 9580 kHz, 0700-1600 on 9580 17630 kHz, 1600-1900 on 15475 kHz, and 1900-2300 on 9580 kHz (BBCM)

February 2000: Radio Japan broadcasts some transmissions from the relay in Gabon, at Moyabi, for the B99 season to the Middle East: 0100-0200 on 9660 in English, 0230-0430 on 9515 in Persian, Japanese and Arabic, 0800-1000 on 15230 in Japanese. The relay is also used for programmes to Africa: 1600-1800 on 15355 in Japanese and English. (EDXP)

January 2002: Radio Television Nationale Congolaise (RTNC) from Kinshasa is now being relayed on shortwave via Africa No 1 in neighbouring Gabon, following an agreement signed between the two broadcasters in early January. RTNC is relayed on 9770 kHz to cover the whole of the Democratic Republic of Congo between 0400-0600 and 1600-1900. (Congoese TV report via BBCM); confirmed on 8 January from tune-in at 1725 with Congoese-sounding music and talk in vernaculars, news in French at 1800. Full ID in French at 1830 "vous écoutez Radio Télévision Nationale Congolaise..." Reception is difficult with heavy co-channel interference and splatter from adjacent channels, improving slightly after 1830. (Dave Kenny)



July 2003: Radio Japan relay via Moyabi at 1030-1100 in Italian and Swedish to Europe is now on 21730 kHz (ex-21650). (Observer-Bulgaria)

March 2004: Africa No 1 schedule (all programmes via Moyabi in French to Africa):
0500-0700 on 9580
1600-2100 on 9580 & 15475
0700-1600 on 9580 & 17630
2100-2300 on 9580
(www.africa1.com via Tony Rogers 5 March)

April 2004: Relays via Moyabi for A-04:

0400-0430 R France Int	English	9805	0400-0430 R France Int	English	9805
0400-0430 R France Int	English	9805	0700-0800 R France Int	English	15605
0400-0500 R France Int	French	4890	0700-1600 Africa No 1	French	9580 & 17630
0430-0500 R Japan	Russian	11970	1030-1045 R Japan	Italian	21820
0500-0530 R France Int	English	11685 & 15605	1045-1100 R Japan	Swedish	21820
0500-0530 R Japan	Spanish	11970	1600-2100 Africa No 1	French	9580 15475
0500-0600 R France Int	French	6175	1700-1800 R France Int	Portuguese	12015
0500-0700 Africa No 1	French	9580	1700-1800 R Japan	English	15355
0530-0545 R Japan	Italian	11970	1800-1900 R France Int	French	9790
0545-0600 R Japan	Swedish	11970	1800-1900 R Japan	Japanese	15355
0600-0630 R Japan	German	11970	1900-2200 R France Int	French	11955
0630-0700 R Japan	French	11970	2100-2300 Africa No 1	French	9580

January 2006: Africa No 1 scheduled 0700-1600 on 17630 kHz, but there appears to be a regular break in transmission between 1030-1100 (Tony Rogers); it was subsequently found that the transmitter switches to 217820 kHz between 1030-1100 for Radio Japan relay and then back to 17630 kHz.

Radio Gabon, which until recently had been closing its 4777 kHz transmitter at 1700, is on occasions extending transmissions until 1900 UTC. Heard on 7 January with news in French from tune-in at 1840 until 1855. Following ID's, 4777 kHz closed abruptly at 1901 (Dave Kenny); The current shortwave schedule for RTVG is now as follows, based on various reports: 0500-0630 on 4777 kHz; 0630-1600 on 7270 kHz (but unconfirmed); 1600-1700/1900 on 4777 kHz (Tony Rogers)

Libyan opposition station, Sawt al-Amel (Voice of Hope), which was taken off satellite because of the problems Libyan jamming was causing to other broadcasters, has turned to shortwave. It is now on the air daily from an undisclosed transmitter site at 1700-1900 on either 17660 or 17720 kHz (Nick Grace, Clandestine Radio Watch, 25 January); widely reported since 26 January at 1200-1400 on 17680 kHz, probably via a transmitter in Russia/CIS. Sawt al-Amel is believed to be sponsored by the Libyan-opposition group, the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, amongst others.

February 2006: The Libyan opposition Sawt al-Amal (Voice of Hope) can now be heard at 1200-1400 in the range 17660 to 17780 kHz (Observer reports it is from Moldova with 250 kW). Sawt al-Amal is now accompanied by three or more other signals in the same frequency range, presumably being used as jammers: One, which identifies as Libyan Radio (ID "idhaat al jamaheriya til ozma") carries a lot of Arabic music; this signs on just before 1200 with transmitter tones similar to those used by transmitters in the CIS. A second station, usually heard from 1215-1530 UTC on or around 17670-80 kHz, carries continuous West African and French music. Observations indicate that this may be coming from one of Africa No 1's high-power transmitters at Moyabi, Gabon. There are also bubble-jammers and other forms of interference, such as continuous carriers or non-stop Arabic music. Check 17660 to 17680 kHz from 1200-1500 UTC. Sawt al-Amal previously broadcast via satellite with a UK licence. It is probably linked to the former CIA-backed station Voice of the Libyan People which broadcast during the 1980s.

The behaviour of one shortwave transmitter at Moyabi in February 2006:

0700-1030 Africa No 1 on 17630
 1030-1100 Radio Japan in Italian/Swedish on 21820
 1100-1130 Africa No 1 on 17630
 1130-1530 Franco-African type music on 17670/75/80
 1530-1600 Africa No 1 on 17630
 1600-1900 Africa No 1 on 15475

Africa No 1's absence from 17630 at any time between 1130 and 1530 seems to be accounted for by the appearance of the non-stop Franco-African type music shadowing the Libyan opposition station Sawt al-Amal on 17670/75/80 until it signs off at 1400, with the music then remaining on air until 1530 when the transmitter switches back to 17630 with Africa No 1 programming. (Tony Rogers, BDXC e-mail news 19 February); a second transmitter originating from Moyabi was seemingly added for the music service, leaving Africa No 1's service on 17630 kHz uninterrupted.

March 2006: During March the Libyan opposition station Sawt al-Amal has continued to broadcast from 1200-1400 daily in the range 17670-17690 kHz, via a transmitter in Moldova (Pridnestrovye). It is subject to intermittent bubble jamming and other types of interference.

The station playing non-stop Arabic music continues to be heard from 1200-1400 usually on 17660 kHz. It identifies as Libyan Radio ("Sawt al Ozma") and is believed to be from a hired transmitter in the CIS.

The mystery music station, which during February had been playing mostly non-stop Franco-African music is now playing mainly Afro-Cuban music. It is usually heard during the period 1200-1530 in the range 17670-17690 kHz. It is often co-channel with Sawt al-Amal but continues in the clear after that closes at 1400. It may be off the air at weekends (Dave Kenny, Tony Rogers); On 21 March, Bernie O'Shea in Canada (via DXLD) reported hearing the "wandering African music jammer" at 1445 on 17685 kHz in parallel with Africa No 1 on 17630 kHz, thus proving it is from Moyabi.

April 2006: It appears from Radio France International's A-06 schedule and HFCC registrations that RFI may no longer be using the Moyabi relay station. If confirmed this would leave only NHK, Africa No 1 and the 16m music station using the Gabon-based shortwave transmitters (Tony Rogers)

Since the start of the A-06 season, the Libyan opposition station Sawt al-Amal has continued to be heard from 1200-1400 in the range 17670-17690 kHz. The continuous African music station (believed to be originating from Moyabi) can usually be heard from around 1300/1310-1530 shadowing Sawt al-Amal. The Arabic music broadcast from Libya (possibly via a CIS-based transmitter) continues to be heard from 1200-1400 on 17660 kHz (observation by Dave Kenny in early April)

July 2006: Relays via Moyabi for the A-06 season:

0430-0500 NHK R Japan	Russian	11970	1030-1045 NHK R Japan	Italian	21820
0500-0530 NHK R Japan	Spanish	11970	1045-1100 NHK R Japan	Swedish	21820
0500-0700 Africa No 1	French	9580	1100-1600 Africa No 1	French	9580 17630
0530-0545 NHK R Japan	Italian	11970	1245-1530 African music		17620-17695
0545-0600 NHK R Japan	Swedish	11970	1600-2100 Africa No 1	French	9580 15475
0600-0630 NHK R Japan	German	11970	1700-1800 NHK R Japan	English	15355
0630-0700 NHK R Japan	French	11970	1800-1900 NHK R Japan	Japanese	15355
0700-1030 Africa No 1	French	9580 17630	2100-2300 Africa No 1	French	9580
1030-1100 Africa No 1	French	9580			

Sawt al-Amal, the Libyan opposition station, continued to be heard in July between 1200-1400 in the range 17670-17695 kHz, starting off on one frequency and then shifting to another at 1300. The station seemingly trying to jam it with lively non-stop African music was also heard regularly on either the same frequency as Sawt al-Amal or nearby until close at 1530 (Tony Rogers)

November 2006: The station playing non-stop Afro-pop and thought to be coming from a transmitter at Moyabi in Gabon is now observed coming on-air at 1130 UTC. Heard on 17660 kHz on both 25 and 26 November (Tony Rogers)

April 2007: According to press reports in late March, Libya has bought or is planning to buy the Africa No 1 radio station in Gabon. Ivory Coast newspaper L'Inter said that Africa No 1 had been financially strapped and was unable to pay its bills. This would explain the African music "jammer" heard in the 1130-1530 UTC period on a frequency between 17620-17690 kHz apparently being used to jam the Libyan opposition station Sawt al-Amal. This can be heard in the same frequency range around 1200-1400.

It subsequently became known that Libya had obtained a 52% share of Africa No 1 in Gabon (and as a result the Moyabi transmitting centre as well), with the Gabonese government holding 35% and Gabonese private shareholders 13%. The agreement between Libya and the Gabonese state stipulated that the latter had to take care of the liabilities of the company while Libya was committed to the cost of modernisation of the infrastructures.

July 2007: The station playing non-stop Afro-pop, believed to be originating from Moyabi, appears to have been discontinued, presumably as the Libyan opposition station Sawt al-Amal is no longer heard.

November 2007: Radio Japan relays via Moyabi have been reduced for the B-07 season. New schedule:

0430-0500	Russian	Europe	11970
0630-0700	French	Europe	11970
1700-1800	English	Southern Africa	15355
1800-1900	Japanese	Southern Africa	15355

December 2007: The current schedule for Africa No 1 is:

0500-0700	French	9580
0700-1600	French	9580 17630
1600-1900	French	9580 15475
1900-2300	French	9580

March 2008: At the end of the B-07 season on 29 March, Radio Japan discontinued the last remaining relays via Moyabi by an international broadcasting station, leaving just Africa No 1 as the sole user of the transmitting station.

January 2009: Africa No 1 is now only using one shortwave transmitter on 9580 kHz between 0500-2300.

August 2009: Africa No 1 was heard on 21 August from 1800-1900 with good signal on 15475 kHz instead of the usual 9580 kHz. (Thorsten Hallmann, DXLD)

April 2011: Africa No 1 is in difficulties as a result of international sanctions against Libya, which had been financing the station since 1998. Senegal's PANA news agency reported 29 April that "Pan African Radio, Africa No 1, has lost its signal and is no longer being received in Gabon and elsewhere in Africa since Wednesday [27 April]. According to the daily 'L'Union', the satellite operator Eutelsat might have stopped its services to the station over an estimated 200m CFA francs in arrears of payment. The station has been experiencing serious financial problems since 2001, especially after Radio France Internationale and Japanese Radio NHK stopped shortwave broadcasting [via Gabon]. The arrival of Libyan partners had restored hope among the workers, who are now threatened by the ongoing political crisis in Libya.



The crisis, marked by the freezing of Libyan assets and the Western military intervention in Libya, has impacted negatively on the station, which has a total debt of 1.2bn CFA francs, according to the management. A representative of the Libyan partners in Gabon, Abubaker Ali, said the salaries of the station's journalists were paid only until the end of March 2011. Ali said that the crisis in Libya prevented Libyan-African Investment Portfolio (LAP) from having access to the required funds. Libyan Jamahiriya Broadcasting became the majority shareholder in Africa No. 1 with 52% of the capital, the Gabonese government owns 35% and the Gabonese private sector 13%. The station started broadcasting in 1981"

Africa No 1 was still operating on shortwave 9580 kHz when checked on 29 April around 1800-1900 but only broadcasting continuous French music. (Dave Kenny)

January 2012: Africa No 1 only operates on one shortwave transmitter: 9580 kHz between 0500-2300.

January 2013: Africa No 1 continues to broadcast on shortwave using a single transmitter at Moyabi on 9580 kHz between 0500-2300.

July 2013: Africa No 1 on 9580 kHz appears to be inactive. Medi 1 is currently heard on 9579.1 kHz (rather than its usual 9575 kHz) and this would make reception of Africa No 1 difficult, but it appears that Africa No 1 has been silent for a few months now.

December 2013: An indefinite strike has been called at pan-African radio station Africa No 1 in Libreville due to non-payment of five months' arrears of wages. The station has been experiencing serious financial problems since the withdrawal of capital by the French company Sofirad in 2002. Libya became a majority shareholder in 2007 but following the overthrow of Col Gaddafi's government the funding situation has become more acute. The Gabonese government has invested nearly 14bn CFA francs to try to save the station, so far without success. (Reports by koaci.com 21 December and Gabon Review via Alan Pennington)

February 2014: Africa No 1 has not been heard on its shortwave frequency 9580 kHz since early 2013. Tony Rogers recently emailed the station to ask about the shortwave transmissions and received this reply on 9 February from Dominique Guihot "Unfortunately, it doesn't work any more. Technical problems. But the team is working on that".

The end: Africa No 1 has not been heard on shortwave since early 2013 and it seems very unlikely now that any shortwave transmissions will ever be heard again from Moyabi ...

The prize! And finally, what about that car that was offered as a prize by Africa No 1 back in 1979? Well, I came across an old "Sweden Calling DXers" script from 1981 which gave the following information:

Sweden Calling DXers - Bulletin Nr 1659 - 10 November 1981: We asked some time ago if anyone knew who had won the Africa No 1 contest, in which they were to be giving away a Peugeot car. Dr Hansjoerg Biener in Neu Ulm, West Germany has received the following letter from Andre Defrise of Regie Internationale Africa No 1: "The tests on Africa No 1 took place from Sept 17th until Oct 22nd, 1979. The reward was a 504 Peugeot. More than 200,000 postcards have been sent. The Gabonese authorities in Libreville were entrusted with the drawing of lots. The winner, Mr Thomas Egue, an accountant living in Adibjan, Ivory Coast, received his gift on 24 November 1980 in Abidjan."

The picture on the front cover and those on pages 6 and 7, have been taken from an excellent series of photographs posted by [jbdodane](#) that were taken on 28 December 2013. The full story of JB's fascinating cycling trip through Africa can be found at <https://freewheely.com>

The Moyabi Story - compiled and updated by Tony Rogers - February 2017
(comments/corrections can be sent by email to tony@bdxc.org.uk)

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